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Saving Money on Fuel Isn't a Magic Trick

By Jon Bruning, Nebraska Attorney General

Nebraska has seen some of the highest gas prices in the nation this summer. As gas prices rise, so do the number of offers for "gas saving" products. These products can take the form of everything, from pills or powder that you drop into your gas tank, to bottles of "magic potion", to fuel system magnets.

A couple of weeks ago at the Madison County Fair, I saw a booth promoting a gas additive called BioPerformance. Sales representatives claimed that the powder, when added to your fuel tank, reduces pollution and increases fuel efficiency. Their literature alleged the product has been registered with the EPA or has passed EPA evaluations. Registering a product with the EPA does not involve testing or verification of product claims.

In January, a court in Texas ordered BioPerformance to pay \$7 million back to consumers for deceptive marketing and operating a pyramid scheme. In a 2006 study, the Environmental Protection Agency tested more than 100 gas-saving devices and not one was found to significantly improve fuel efficiency.

Be extremely cautious if you are considering a gas additive. Always ask the manufacturer for data to prove its claims, and research the product before purchasing it.

You don't have to resort to magic products to save gas money. There are other ways to increase your gas mileage and protect your pocketbook. You can find the following tips and more at the U.S. Department of Energy's web site, www.fueleconomy.gov.

- Refrain from "hard driving." Sudden stops and starts can decrease your gas mileage by as much as 33% on the highway and 5% in town.
- Refrain from idling. It uses gas, and you are getting zero miles per gallon.
- Keep your car engine properly tuned. This can improve gas mileage by an average of 4%. Fixing a serious problem like a faulty oxygen sensor can improve your gas mileage by as much as 40%.
- Keep your tires properly inflated and aligned. This can increase your gas mileage by 3%.

- Drive the speed limit. Gas mileage decreases rapidly at speeds above 60 mph. Each 5 mph you drive over 60 it is like paying an extra \$.20 per gallon at the pump.

A few simple changes in your driving habits is more effective than questionable gas additives.

If you have any questions, contact our Consumer Protection Division toll-free at (800)727-6432 or file a complaint online at www.ago.ne.gov.